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# u.s. coast guard news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Coast Guard urges boaters to stay safe this summer

### ***- National Safe Boating Week -***

SAN DIEGO -- Memorial Day is traditionally the start of the boating season. This year hundreds of our friends and family members will die in boating accidents. Drowning will cause most of these deaths. Most of the victims will not be wearing their lifejackets.

What will you do to ensure that you, your friends and your family members do not become this summer's statistics?

National Safe Boating Week, May 19-25 is an ideal time for all boaters to consider safety as they get ready to go out and enjoying the waters. It's easy to do, while the consequences of ignoring safety are devastating.

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The most effective way to not become a statistic is to **wear your life jacket**.

Every summer, the majority of boating fatalities result from drowning and most of these people were not wearing their life jackets.

Operating your boat in a courteous manner and obeying the navigation rules is another big lifesaver. Boat collisions are the most common type of accident with trauma being the second most common cause of death in boating accidents.

Alcohol and drug use while boating are another great threat to your safety. The loss of judgement and increased fatigue caused by such use puts you, your boat's passengers and the other boaters around you at risk.

Another threat to boaters is carbon monoxide poisoning. This colorless odorless gas has contributed to multiple deaths in the past years on the Colorado River and its lakes.

The accumulation of carbon monoxide, resulting from improper ventilation of engine compartments, is something every motorboat operator should watch for. The headache and drowsiness symptomatic of poisoning is easily overlooked, making carbon monoxide a most insidious threat to safety.

Carbon monoxide can also pose a danger outside of the engine compartment. A series of drownings was linked to exhaust being vented at houseboats swimming platforms. The Coast Guard issued mandatory recalls of certain houseboats to correct this problem. (Further information on the recalls is available at [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org).)

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In another case, carbon monoxide poisoning contributed to the death of a 15-year-old girl from Ontario last summer while vacationing in Mexico. She was being towed slowly behind a boat without a lifejacket when she let go and drown before the people in the boat could get back to her.

The combination of the carbon monoxide from the exhaust, the poor safety judgement of everyone involved (alcohol influenced), and the lack of a lifejacket led to this death.

If we take a moment to take some simple safety steps, we can make this year's boating season the safest ever.

### ***Boat Smart from the Start. Wear your lifejacket.***

The Coast Guard Auxiliary and the US Power Squadron provide boating safety information, classes and free vessel safety checks. The Coast Guard Auxiliary will provide free vessel safety checks this weekend in San Diego, at Lake Pleasant and at Lake Roosevelt.

#### ***Boating Safety Information***

Coast Guard Auxiliary	<a href="http://www.cgaux.org">www.cgaux.org</a>	(800) 368-5647
US Power Squadron	<a href="http://www.usps.org">www.usps.org</a>	(858) 485-1979
USCG Marine Safety Office San Diego	<a href="http://www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/mso">www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/mso</a>	
Safe Boating Campaign	<a href="http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com">www.safeboatingcampaign.com</a>	
USCG Office of Safe Boating	<a href="http://www.uscgboating.org">www.uscgboating.org</a>	
National Safe Boating Council	<a href="http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org">www.safeboatingcouncil.org</a>	

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